permission the importer has to apply to the concerned State Pollution Control Board for import authorisation. The licence for imports of wastes is issued by the DGFT after receiving the application enclosed with authorisation document issued by the State Pollution Control Board.

The Hon'ble High court of Delhi on 10.4.1996 in Writ Petition No.67/96— M/s Harshwardhan Steel Vs. Union of India and Others ordered that the Government of India should ensure that no toxic waste is imported into the country. The Ministry of Environment & Forests has not granted any permission for export of wastes to India after the Delhi High Court order of 10.4.1996 and has also written to all the State Pollution Control Boards to strictly comply with the High Court's order and not to grant any import authorisation.

Introduction of shuttle train between Ahmedabad and Palanpur

*152 SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been brought to his notice that a large number of daily passengers residing at Ahmedabad, and required to go to Palanpur, are facing difficulty due to non-availability of any shuttle train; and

(b) if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken for the introduction of a shuttle train leaving Ahmedabad in the morning and Palanpur in the evening?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) Due to gauge conversion works, train services including between Ahmedabad and Palanpur were curtailed in phases.

After conversion of Delhi-Ahmedabad route, 9105/9106 Delhi-Ahmedabad Mail and 9653/9654 Ahmedabad-Ajmer Fast Passenger have been provided from 3.5.97 and 11.5.97 respectively serving Ahmedabad and Palanpur.

It is proposed to introduce 2915/2916 Ashram Express w.e.f. 1.8.97 and a shuttle DMU train between Ahmedabad and Abu Road serving Palanpur during 1997-98.

(b) A morning shuttle between Ahmedabad and Palanpur is not proposed at present due to operational and resource constraints.

Consumption of Petroleum products

*153. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether consumption of petroleum products like petrol and diesel has shown a rising trend during the last two years and so far during the current year; if so, the extent thereof;

(b) what was the consumption of petrol and diesel during the above mentioned period;

(c) whether any steps have been taken to reduce the consumption of petrol and diesel; if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if no steps have been taken, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir. The sale of petrol and diesel has shown high growth during the last 2 years and during April-June, 1997. The percentage growth in sale of petrol and diesel during this period is detailed below:—

Year	Petrol	Diesel
1995-96	13.0	14.1
1996-97	6.4	9.1
1997 (April-June)	2.4	9.3

(b) The total consumption of petrol and diesel is given below:

(Fig. in TMT)

Year	Petrol	Diesel
1995-96	4679	32254
1996-97	4980	35176
1997 (April-June)	1315	9676

(c) and (d) Increase in requirement of petroleum products is essentially attributed to increase in economic activities in the country. Since petroleum products are important input for economic development of the country, Government is meeting full essential demand.

The effort is not to reduce supply or consumption of petroleum products but to promote their efficient and economically optimal use. The Govenment has initiated various steps to promote conservation of petroleum products in the transport, industrial, agricultural and domestic sectors. These include adoption of measures and practices which are conducive to increased fuel efficiency and training programme in the transport sector, modernisation of boilers, furnaces and other oil operated equipments with efficient ones and promotion of fuel efficient practices and equipment in the industrial sector, standardisation of fuel efficient irrigation pumpsets and rectification of existing pumpsets to make them more energy efficient in the agricultural sector and development as well as promotion of the use of fuel efficient equipment and appliances like kerosene and LPG stoves in the household sector. These activities are promoted and coordinated by the Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) and oil companies.

Improvement in Teaching Standards

*154. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the University Grants Commission is proposing to increase salaries of teaching staff in colleges;

(b) whether the UGC has taken note of the falling teaching standards in the universities and colleges; if so, what are the steps taken by the UGC to improve the teaching standards; and

(c) what disciplinary steps the UGC has proposed to the universities and colleges on poor results and falling teaching standards?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI): (a) to (c) The revision of pay and allowances of college and University teachers has become due. The University Grants Commission (UGC), is currently examining the recommendations made in this behalf by a Committee appointed by it earlier. The Government will take a decision, after receiving the recommendations of the UGC in the matter. Care will be taken to ensure that the revised package of pay and allowances contains adequate provisions for maintenance and improvement of teaching standards.

The steps already initiated by the UGC for improving teaching standards in Universities and Colleges may be summarised as under:

—Academic staff colleges established for reorientation of newly appointed university and college teachers.

—27 Curriculum Development Centres in Sciences and Humanities established to modernise curricula. Model curricula has been prepared for 27 disciplines in undergraduate and post-graduate courses.

—Financial assistance provided by UGC for improvement in teaching and research under Special Assistance Programmes, like Centres of Advanced Study (CAS), College Science Improvement Programme (COSIP), Strengthening of Infrastructure in Science and Technology (COSIST), etc.

—Inter-University Centres established by UGC to provide front-line facilities and services for advancement of research in the University system.

—Higher priority given to grant of autonomy to selected Colleges and University Departments.

—Guidelines for implementation of an Academic Calendar circulated. These guidelines emphasize observance of at least 180 teaching days by Universities/ Colleges.